

# FEBRUARY SAFETY BULLETIN

2/4/2017

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Roseburg Healthcare System (VARHS)

[Edition 1, Volume 3]

## Annual Workplace Evaluation (AWE)

By Shirlene Liles

### What is the AWE?

The annual workplace evaluation (AWE) was designed to meet inspection criteria outlined in 29CFR1960. These inspections are conducted by Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) occupational and safety health (OSH) staff. Each year safety and industrial hygiene programs are evaluated for compliance with occupational safety and health administration (OSHA) regulations. This year our AWE is being held 13-17 February, during this time our auditors will be looking at our programs and inspecting our spaces. The main focus areas for this inspection will be the lock out tag out program (for fluorescent ballast replacement) and laser safety. Contact us for more information.

### Safety Hotline 44000

Safety Manager	Jon Hanson	41329
Safety Specialist	Tony DiMare	40111
Safety Specialist	Shirlene Liles	40087
GEMS Manager	Ryan Binford	41319
Industrial Hygienist	Alaina Ferrall-Finzer	40305

## From the GEMS Program Manager

By Ryan Binford

Please remember that during the week of February 13 -17, 2017 VISN 20 will be conducting a VISN Environmental Gap Analysis (VEGA) focusing on our environmental programs. Storage, labeling, and waste procedures will be included in this visit.

## From the Safety Manager

By Jon Hanson

### Understanding the Problem

Hospitals have serious hazards—lifting and moving patients, needlesticks, slips, trips, and falls, and the potential for agitated or combative patients or visitors—along with a dynamic, unpredictable environment and a unique culture. Caregivers feel an ethical duty to "do no harm" to patients, and some will even put their own safety and health at risk to help a patient.

### Hospital work can be surprisingly dangerous.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the likelihood of injury or illness resulting in days away from work is higher in hospitals than in construction and manufacturing—two industries that are traditionally thought to be relatively hazardous.

**Injuries and illnesses come at a high cost.** When an employee gets hurt on the job, hospitals pay the price in many ways, including: Workers' compensation for lost wages and medical costs; temporary staffing, backfilling, and overtime when injured employees miss work; turnover costs when an injured employee quits; and decreased productivity and morale as employees become physically and emotionally fatigued.

### Workplace safety also affects patient care.

Manual lifting can injure caregivers and also put patients at risk of falls, fractures, bruises, and skin tears. Caregiver fatigue, injury, and stress are tied to a higher risk of medication errors and patient infections.

## Carbon Monoxide Safety

By Tony DiMare

### *Did you know?*

**More than 150 people in the U.S. die every year from accidental non fire-related carbon monoxide poisoning.**

Carbon monoxide or CO is a colorless and odorless gas. CO poisoning can occur when a fuel-burning appliance or machine, such as a furnace, heater or generator, is not working or vented properly. Breathing CO at high levels can be fatal. Learn what you can do to protect your family from the dangers of CO.

- Install and maintain CO alarms inside your home to provide early warning of CO
- Install CO alarms in a central location outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of your home
- Use portable generators outdoors in well-ventilated areas away from all the doors, windows and vents

- Make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow and other debris

For more information and free resources, visit:

[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)

## Side Walk Maintenance

By Tony DiMare

We are having our sidewalks repaired to make the walking surfaces more smooth and safe. Please use caution and heed the closure signs while we complete this process. The sidewalk near the entrance to building 81 is being removed and replaced, an alternate route has been provided for pedestrian and wheel chair access. Please look for the alternate route just south of the canteen entrance.

## ACCESS TO WORK MEDICAL AND EXPOSURE RECORDS

By Alaina Ferrall-Finzer

OSHA has issued an access to information standard OSHA 1910.1020 that gives each employee the right to review and to request a copy of the individual employee's own medical record and work exposure record. An employee may formally request a copy of his/her exposure and/or medical records in writing to their local Safety Office and Occupational Health Office, respectively. Follow your local procedures on accessing both Exposure and Medical Records. A copy of the standard with appendices is also available to any employee on OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

- Under the standard, an employee also has the right to give written consent for a designated representative (physician or other responsible individual) to have the right to review and or obtain a copy of the individual's record without personal identifiers. The employee must indicate in writing who should have access to the record, what information should be made available, and for what purpose the information will be used.
- The standard gives the recognized local bargaining agent the right of access to employee exposure records without personal identifiers. OSHA Compliance Officers also have authority to access said records during compliance inspections and formal investigations.
- Occupational Health must keep a record documenting any release of information from an employee's medical record.

Other rights are available for your information on VHA Poster 2180, which is posted in most common meeting areas and break rooms throughout the facility.

**CONTACT RICHARD WEBER IN RELEASE OF INFORMATION (EXTENSION 43067) FOR SPECIFICS ON HOW TO OBTAIN YOUR MEDICAL RECORD.**